

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended): A method for protecting a memory space from external access, comprising the steps of:

storing in a location in memory a plurality of lock bits, each associated with a separate logical portion of the memory space and determinative as to the access thereof for a predetermined memory access operation thereon;

detecting a request for access to a desired location in the memory space for operating thereon;

comparing the requested memory access operation with the associated lock bit in the associated logical portion and determining if access is allowed for the requested memory access operation; and

if allowed, performing the requested memory access operation on the desired location in the memory space.

2. (Original): The method of Claim 1, wherein the predetermined operation is a read of an addressable location in the associated logical portion.

3. (Original): The method of Claim 1, wherein the predetermined operation is a write of an addressable location in the associated logical portion.

4. (Original): The method of Claim 1, wherein the predetermined operation is an erase of the associated logical portion for an addressable location therein.

5. (Currently Amended): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of storing in a location the plurality of lock bits comprises [[of]] storing in a variable location in the memory the plurality of lock bits and storing the lock bit location in a known location in the memory, such that in the step of

**AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE**

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comparing, the location of the lock bits is first read from the memory and then the lock bits read from the memory.

6. (Original): The method of Claim 5, wherein the predetermined operation is an erase of the lock bits.

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Contd*

7. (Currently Amended): The method of Claim 6, wherein the predetermined operation of erasing the lock bits requires that each of [[the]] an associated lower logical portion[[s]] of the memory having a relatively lower logical memory address and not containing lock bits be erased before [[the]] a top most portion of memory having a relatively higher logical address than the lower logical portion is erased, which top most portion of the memory that contains the lock bits.

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